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SUBJECT: Investment Minister Manibe on PEC, AEC and CPA Issues

REFS: (A) KHARTOUM 226

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: GNU Minister of Investment and SPLM insider Kosti Manibe thinks that NCP-SPLM disagreements over the Elections Law and the census will be resolved, but argued that the AEC needs to take a more proactive role in resolving such issues. He outlined SPLM reservations (which the GNU reportedly has ignored) about candidate AEC chairman Derek Plumbly. Manibe complained that, while the NCP talks about the unity of Sudan, it pursues policies that undermine it. He said that his Investment Ministry is working to encourage foreign investment outside of greater Khartoum, where the bulk of it currently is concentrated. End summary.

¶2. (U) In a February 12 meeting with Political-Economic Counselor and Economic Officer, Government of National Unity (GNU) Minister of Investment Kosti Manibe reviewed the state of SPLM-NCP discussions on implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). He also discussed the relative roles of the AEC and the PEC in resolving CPA-related issues. Manibe, a native of Central Equatoria State and an ethnic Kuku, is a high-ranking SPLM insider and a member of all of its senior governing bodies.

PEC Not Supplanting the AEC  
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¶3. (SBU) Emboffs asked Manibe about the relationship between the international Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) and the joint NCP-SPLM Political Executive Committee (PEC), established when the SPLM returned to the GNU in December, and whether the PEC is supplanting the AEC as the main venue for the two parties to resolve festering CPA issues. Manibe replied that the NCP seeks to marginalize international involvement in CPA implementation and so tries to avoid engaging in the AEC. However, he said that the parties also have failed to make significant progress in the PEC. Progress there has been made only on issues on which the SPLM and NCP have previously agreed. They have failed to break any new ground.

Elections Law and Census Forms  
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¶4. (U) Manibe said that the NCP and SPLM remain at loggerheads over the issue of proportions in the draft Elections Law (ref a). The NCP continues to insist on a 60%(direct)-40%(proportional) split, while the SPLM is pressing for 50-50 split, to be elected on a single ballot. This would reduce the cost of the election.

¶5. (U) Manibe said the SPLM is pressing the NCP to include questions on ethnicity, residence and religion in the census. The census forms that have been printed without those questions will have to be replaced (ref b). However, Manibe said he is optimistic that the NCP and the SPLM will agree eventually on the Elections Law and that the census should be relatively easy to resolve. (Note:

The following day, February 13, President Al Bashir decreed that the census will be held from April 15 to April 30. End note.)

#### Assessment and Evaluation Commission

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¶16. (SBU) Manibe confirmed that the SPLM has not decided to accept UK Amb. Derek Plumbly as the new Chairman of the AEC. Manibe said that while he has found Plumbly knowledgeable when the two met, many in the SPLM have reservations, based on Plumbly's career specialization as an Arabist, including serving as UK Ambassador to Egypt. Manibe also said that Plumbly's wife is Egyptian. The SPLM is concerned that this background may color Plumbly's views in favor of the NCP. (Note: Despite Manibe's assertion that the SPLM had yet to consent to Plumbly, the following day Sudanese press reported that President Al Bashir had appointed Plumbly to the post. End note.)

¶17. (SBU) Manibe praised the U.S. for its role in brokering the CPA and in its implementation. He repeated that the NCP is suspicious of the international partners in the AEC, not only the United States. Emboffs commented that this is unfortunate. Time is running short on CPA implementation. If issues continue to drag on unresolved, it could build up into a crisis a year from now.

¶18. (SBU) Manibe said that the work of the AEC could be improved, especially in the four Working Groups. He added that the SPLM would like the international members of the AEC, including the United States, to be more proactive. The AEC should not simply wait for the NCP and SPLM to work out disagreements between themselves in the PEC and then approve. It has to take an active part in resolving issues. Emboffs remarked that it would be helpful if the SPLM would make that point with the members and encourage the members to do so.

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#### Wealth Sharing, Unity, and Elections

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¶19. (SBU) Manibe stated that whatever the outcome of the 2011 referendum on national unity, it would be useful to plan ahead on wealth sharing between the North and South. He said that there had been some initial discussion of this, but that nothing ever developed. Now the SPLM is pretending that no such discussions have ever taken place. Emboffs commented that this is a typical NCP strategy, to agree to something and then back away.

¶110. (SBU) Manibe continued that while the NCP constantly harps on the national unity of Sudan, it pursues policies that seem intended to make unity unattractive. It is difficult to fathom their logic, since it is most in the NCP's interest to make unity work and hold Sudan together.

¶111. (SBU) Manibe said that the NCP, while publicly accusing the SPLM of wanting to cancel the scheduled 2009 elections, has been pressing the SPLM privately to agree to do so. Manibe admitted that the SPLM had at first resisted elections during the Naivasha peace talks in 2004, but it had firmly committed to them in the CPA and now sees the elections as a key guarantee of CPA as a whole. Asked about the impact of the recent election unrest in Kenya on Sudan's election plans, Manibe said that the Kenya violence was worrisome, but it was more important to hold elections in order to protect the CPA.

#### Investment Ministry

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¶112. (U) Manibe said that within his Ministry, relations between NCP and SPLM representatives largely depend on the personalities of the individuals. He said that the Ministry is seeking to encourage foreign investment outside of the Khartoum area, where he estimated 80% of it currently is directed. It is working with states to develop their own investment plans and priorities. He also cited the need for improved infrastructure, including roads and power, to bring investment to outlying regions.

Comment

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¶12. (SBU) As we have found to be the case with many other SPLM officials, Manibe was more comfortable discussing the ins and outs of NCP-SPLM politics than with the operations of his Ministry. Manibe was well informed and confident in his views and opinions. His remarks on the Election Law and the census track closely with what we have heard from other sources. However, it was remarkable that within a day of Manibe saying that the SPLM had problems with AEC chair Plumbly (and Manibe should know since he is an SPLM leader on the AEC) President Bashir appointed Plumbly to the position. Though it is possible that Manibe was not fully briefed by SPLM peers on the Plumbly appointment, it is likely another example of the Presidency taking actions without obtaining full SPLM approval. Although it is not clear who ordered the printing of the census form -- apparently without SPLM approval on the questions posed -- it appears to follow a similar pattern.

POWERS